

Health Disparities

--Fact Sheet--

Breast and Cervical Cancer

- \$ Although deaths caused by breast cancer have decreased among white women since the 1980s, African American women continue to have higher rates of mortality from breast and cervical cancer.
- \$ Limited access to health care services, as well as language and cultural barriers, are primary reasons for the low rates of screening and treatment for other minority groups, such as Hispanics and Latinos, American Indians and Alaskan Natives, Asian Americans, and Pacific Islander women.

Cardiovascular Disease

- \$ African Americans have the highest rate of high blood pressure of all groups and tend to develop it younger than others.
- \$ Counties in rural Appalachia have the second highest death rate in the nation from heart disease. Nearly 44 percent of these residents have never had a serum cholesterol check.

Diabetes

- \$ Among adults aged 20 or older, African Americans are twice as likely as whites to have diabetes, and American Indians and Alaskan Natives are 2.6 times more likely to have diabetes.
- \$ African Americans and American Indians have higher rates of diabetes-related complications such as kidney disease and amputations.

HIV/AIDS

- \$ HIV infection is the fifth leading cause of death for people who are 25-44 years old in the United States, and is the leading cause of death for African American men in the same age group.
- \$ Although African American and Hispanic persons represent about one-quarter of the country's population, more than half of new AIDS cases reported to CDC are among these populations.
- \$ Among children, the disparities are even more dramatic, with African American and Hispanic children representing more than 80 percent of pediatric AIDS cases in 2000.

Infant Mortality

- \$ Infant mortality among African Americans in 2000 occurred at a rate of 14.1 deaths per 1,000 live births. This is more than twice the national average of 6.9 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- \$ The leading causes of infant death include congenital abnormalities, pre-term/low birth weight, Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), problems related to complications of pregnancy, and respiratory distress syndrome. SIDS deaths among American Indian and Alaskan Natives are 2.3 times the rate for non-Hispanic white mothers.

Obesity

- \$ African Americans (66 percent) and Hispanic adults (62 percent) are twice as likely to be overweight than Asian/Pacific Islanders (32 percent). Slightly more than half of white non-Hispanic adults are considered overweight.
- \$ Counties in rural Appalachia have the ninth highest rate of obesity.
- \$ Among African American Americans, the proportion of women who are obese is 80 percent higher than the proportion of men who are obese. This gender difference is also seen among Hispanic women and men, but the percentage of white, non-Hispanic women and men who are obese is about the same.

Vaccines

- \$ In 1999 approximately 90 percent of all influenza and pneumonia-related deaths occurred in individuals aged 65 and older. Older Hispanic and African American adults are much less likely to be vaccinated against influenza and pneumococcal disease than their white counterparts.
- \$ In the 1998-2000 National Immunization Survey, 11 major urban areas reported racial/ethnic disparities of greater than 10 percent for at least one age-appropriate childhood immunization.

